PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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Web site: http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/pharme/index.html

PLEASE CIRCULATE AMONG DISPENSING STAFF

New Methadone Maintenance Payment Program

Pharmacare has been working for some time to develop a methadone payment program that:

- recognizes the value of the methadone services provided by BC pharmacies
- provides equitable compensation for the work undertaken by those pharmacies
- standardizes remuneration for patients across all Pharmacare plans
- decreases administration time for both pharmacists and Pharmacare

Following consultations with the British Columbia Pharmacy Association (BCPhA), the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia and participating pharmacies, Pharmacare is pleased to announce that, in determining remuneration levels, the principles of a proposal put forward by the BCPhA were accepted without revision.

Details of the new program

Effective May 1, 2001, methadone under the *Methadone Maintenance Program* will be dispensed under the PINs described below:-

A. **Methadone dispensations involving direct interaction with the patient** must be dispensed under PIN 66999990.

Pharmacies who choose to participate in the new payment program will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02/ml
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid
- a $7.70 interaction fee will be paid for each dispensation of methadone under the *Methadone Maintenance Program*. The interaction fee is payable to **enrolled** pharmacies for all Pharmacare eligible claims, including those under the Universal Plan deductible.

  Interaction fees will be automatically calculated using PharmaNet medication history queries of methadone maintenance by PIN by pharmacy. Payments will be made monthly and noted on the Remittance Advice Form under a separate adjustment code.

In return for this compensation for the unique elements of methadone dispensing, participating pharmacies will undertake not to bill patients more than the amounts compensated by Pharmacare. Pharmacies must also agree not to offer cash incentives or other inducements to methadone clients.

Pharmacies who elect not to participate in the new payment program will not receive an interaction fee but will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02/ml
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid.

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B. (1) Methadone dispensations that <u>do not</u> involve direct patient interaction (including methadone provided to incarcerated patients, patients in pre-trial facilities, Plan B patients or to physicians for administration to patients) must be dispensed under PIN 66999991. All dispensations under this PIN, except Plan B (see below), will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02/ml, and
- the usual dispensing fee will be paid.

The accuracy and validity of methadone claims will be verified on a monthly basis.

(2) Methadone dispensations for Plan B patients must also be dispensed under PIN 66999991 and will be reimbursed as follows:

- drug cost reimbursement will be set at the actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02/ml, and
- the usual Plan B capitation rates will be paid.

<u>All</u> prescriptions under the *Methadone Maintenance Program* must be for the 1 mg per ml strength, as per federal guidelines. If a physician prescribes a different strength, please advise them to contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons for clarification.

<u>Please note</u>: In consideration of the financial burden that additional dispensing fees would place on Seniors who are not currently paying dispensing fees and who have not yet met the annual Plan A deductible, Pharmacare has arranged to waive the dispensing fees for methadone maintenance dispensations for Seniors. Pharmacies can process Plan A methadone maintenance transactions as normal; Pharmacare will automatically waive the dispensing fees for affected Seniors for those transactions.

Process for participating

Participation in the interaction fee portion of this payment program is optional. We hope the new program will encourage pharmacies who dispense methadone to continue doing so, and encourage other pharmacies to consider providing this important service.

Attached is a detailed letter regarding the new payment program and an addendum to the *Pharmacy Participation Agreement*. To participate in the program, please sign this addendum and return it to Pharmacare by April 20, 2001. On receipt of the signed addendum, Pharmacare will return a signed copy and register your pharmacy for the program.

Pharmacies who do not wish to enroll in this new payment program will be reimbursed at actual acquisition cost to a maximum of $0.02/ml and their usual dispensing fee.

Informing patients of the changes

As outlined in the enclosed information sheets, the cost impact for patients will be minimal. Please provide a copy of the information sheet to your *Methadone Maintenance Program* patients. Patients who have additional questions are welcome to contact Pharmacare at the numbers provided on the back of the information sheet.